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ABSTRACT

Motivated by attrition in French immersion programs in Canada, a study was undertaken of the perceptions of French coordinators, helping teachers, school principals, and French immersion teachers in British Columbia (Canada) school districts regarding the attrition rate and students' reasons for leaving immersion. The research differed from previous studies in that it also investigated the strategies used by administrators and teacher to reduce attrition. Over two-thirds of French coordinators responding felt the dropout rate was normal. Elementary school principals felt students were more likely to drop out in seventh grade early immersion than late immersion, and secondary school principals felt students were more likely to drop out in eighth grade. There was little consensus among the teachers. Overall, data suggest that junior high school is a critical period for retention. All groups felt academic difficulty, limited choice of subjects, and peer pressure were the most common reasons for leaving immersion. Some districts had participated in research on French immersion attrition; most of the coordinators and some principals and teachers mentioned some form of action to reduce attrition. Suggestions for intervention to reduce attrition fell into three categories: district, school, and classroom. A list of suggestions to reduce the drop-out rate in French Immersion Programs is provided. (Contains 11 references.) (MSE)

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ATTRITION IN FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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ATTRITION IN FRENCH IMMERSION PROGRAMS: POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS *

Abstract: The attrition of French immersion programs in Canada has become a source of concern for some parents and educators. The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the perceptions French coordinators, helping teachers, school principals and French immersion teachers in British Columbia had regarding the rate of attrition and their reasons for students leaving French immersion programs. This research differed from previous studies in that it also investigated the types of strategies being undertaken by administrators and educators to lower the attrition rate. Possible strategies to be implemented at the district, school and individual classroom levels are discussed and an intervention project is proposed.

Résumé: Le décrochage dans les programmes d'immersion française au Canada semblent inquiéter certains parents et éducateurs. Le but principal de notre étude était d'identifier les perceptions que les coordonnateurs de français, les assistants pédagogiques, les directeurs d'écoles et les professeurs d'immersion de la Colombie-Britannique avaient à l'égard du taux de décrochage et de ses causes. L'originalité de cette étude se situe surtout au niveau de l'identification des stratégies qu'on utilise ou qu'on pourrait utiliser pour diminuer le taux de décrochage. Un certain nombre de solutions sont proposées à l'intention du conseil scolaire, de l'école et de l'enseignant.

Introduction

The existing research on attrition from French Immersion Programs (FIP) has focused on the grade level timing, incidence rate, and reasons for students leaving immersion programs. Halsall (1994) has pointed out some of the difficulties in interpreting findings on attrition and retention in immersion programs. There are a number of reasons: enrollment records from one year to the next (available from school boards) do not always distinguish between students who leave the program for family mobility reasons and those who switch out of FIP into a regular English program; most of the research has been carried out by large school boards which may not reflect the conditions existing with smaller boards; factors that influence attrition may be related to different characteristics of individual boards; and the definition of attrition itself may vary from one study to another. Importantly, studies based on the assumption that more students would stay in immersion programs if these programs were improved, has not yet been substantiated.

At the *elementary level*, a study done by Delta School District (1992) indicated that transfers out of FIP most frequently occurred after grades one or two and between grades seven and eight. This finding had previously been reported by Morrison (1989) for elementary school years. In contrast, West Vancouver French Immersion Parent Survey (1992) found that attrition was at its highest at the end of grades three and six. This may be partially explained by the fact that in this particular school district, these are natural breaking points in the program, where students physically change schools. The three studies indicate attrition may increase at the point where children change from elementary to secondary schools.

Attrition rates at the *secondary level* were investigated by Adiv (1979) in a group of grade eleven students in twelve Montreal schools. This author found that the majority of the students had transferred out of immersion at the beginning of grade nine, with an attrition rate of 20%. In British Columbia, Lewis (1986) reported an attrition rate of 54% in a group of grade twelve students from four school districts. Delta School District (1992) found that higher rates of transfer were more likely to occur after grade nine and ten. Halsall has reported that " overall 78% of sudents at the Grade12/OAC level (86% of those who wo had been in early French immersion and 71% of those who had been in late French immersion in Grade 8) reported that they had completed, or planned to complete, six or more French immersion credits upon graduation" (Halsall, 1992:iv).

The major reasons cited by parents, teachers and principals in transferring students from FIP are related to three major issues: academic difficulty; social and emotional difficulties; and the quality of teaching and programs.

The first reason, academic difficulty, cited as the main factor includes more specifically the following reasons: anticipation of better performance in English; struggle with French language and course content taught in French; overall academic demands and future plans (Adiv, 1979; Morrison, Pawley, & Bonyun, 1979; Lewis, 1986; Delta School District, 1992; Halsall, 1994); learning disabilities; aptitude, achievement (Hart, Lapkin, & Swain, 1988; Morrison, 1989; Halsall, 1994); understanding and speaking French, verbal communication, ability to concentrate, reading skills (Bonyun, Morrison & Unitt, 1986; Parkin, Morrison, & Watkin, 1987).

The second reason is related to social and emotional difficulties (Delta School District, 1992). Home situation and social maturity (Morrison, 1989); unhappiness, boredom and self-

esteem (Hart *et al.*, 1988), emotional and behavioural problems, self-confidence and social skills (Bonyun, et al, 1986) have been reported.

The third reason is related to the quality of the program and of the teaching (Morrison *et al.*, 1979; Lewis, 1986; Hart *et al.*, 1988, West Vancouver French Immersion Parent Survey, 1992; Halsall, 1994). Relations with French immersion teachers, and a lack of remedial help or special education in FIP (Bonyun *et al.*, 1986; Hart *et al.*, 1988; Halsall, 1994) have also been mentioned.

A number of other reasons for FIP attrition have also been reported : Transfer of sibling out of the program (Delta School District, 1992), general mobility of the population, parental and student commitment and expectations, individual interests, competition between programs (facilities, funding and support), transportation and political climate have been reported (Halsall, 1994). Morrison *et al.*, (1979) and Adiv (1979) cite the lack of opportunity for the students to practice their oral French skills in addition to dissatisfaction and boredom with the immersion program as possible reasons for FIP drop-out.

Very few studies proposed solutions to lower the drop-out rate in FIP. Morrison (1989) describes the systematic procedures of principals in some elementary schools for reviewing children who are experiencing problems. In some schools, regular staff sessions are held in the presence of representatives of the support services group and the psychologist. In other schools, a discussion is held at the school level and the decision to ask for assessment is made by the teacher-diagnostician and the psychologist. Conferences with parents are held during this process.

Results from questionnaires sent to school boards regarding the attrition from FIP in the Halsall (1994) study are worthy of note. Most of the respondents felt that attrition was more of a problem at the secondary level than it was at the elementary level, although few boards had actually done a study of attrition at the secondary level. In some boards, a certificate of immersion was granted at the end of the secondary level, to encourage students to stay in the FIP. Other suggestions by school boards in Halsall's (1994) sample to keep students in immersion were to provide more support for students with special needs; multifaceted program choices at the secondary level; ensure high quality of teaching; increase the diversity of program options; and encourage or implement bilingual exchanges.

The present study was an attempt to address several key issues involved in attrition from French immersion programs in British Columbia. One issue was the grade timing of drop out from the FIP; that is, when is the drop out rate highest and is it higher in students who were in early or late immersion programs? Secondly, what are education personnel's perceptions about the rate of attrition and the reasons why students leave the program? In addition, this study investigated whether research had been conducted on the attrition rate, what that research was, and what strategies were developed from the research to lessen the drop out rate.

Method

Subjects

Of the total 75 school districts in British Columbia, 45 have French immersion programs. Three school districts were chosen among those districts which originally started French immersion programs in British Columbia. Those districts were Coquitlam, Surrey and Vancouver. A fourth district, Delta, was also included because its school board displayed particular interest in the present study.

Questionnaires were distributed to all 45 French Coordinators or Helping Teachers in the province. Twenty-six, or 58 percent of the questionnaires were returned.

A total of 38 questionnaires were distributed to the elementary and secondary school principals in the four selected districts. A total of 22 (58%) were returned: 18 from elementary principals and 4 from secondary principals.

A request was made to the 38 principals asking them to distribute the questionnaire to their grades seven, eight, nine and ten French immersion teachers. It has not been possible to determine the exact number of questionnaires distributed. There were 7 teachers from Coquitlam, 12 from Delta, 5 from Surrey, and 7 from Vancouver. The thirty-one teachers responding represent a total of 22 schools, or a total of 44 percent of the schools with French Immersion Programs in the four districts. There were six secondary (35%) and 16 elementary (49%) schools represented.

Instruments

The principal and teacher questionnaires consisted of four areas of inquiry: 1) whether there had been any action taken to reduce FIP attrition; 2) which programs were perceived to have the highest rate of attrition; 3) what perceptions existed regarding reasons for FIP attrition; and 4) how FIP attrition could be reduced. Items asked on the principal and teacher questionnaires were identical, the only differing factor was that the teacher questionnaire was written in French.

Questionnaires sent to the French coordinators included areas one, three and four from the principal and teacher questionnaires. In addition, the French coordinators were asked "Has there been or is there being any research conducted in your district on drop-outs from FIP?" and "In general, do you feel that FIP drop-out rate in your district is high, normal or low?".

The French coordinators, principals and teachers were also asked whether they would be interested in participating in a study designed to reduce attrition in their district or school.

Results

Results from each inquiry area on the questionnaires will be reported separately.

Are you aware if any action has been taken in your district/school/class to lower the drop-out rate in FIP?
(Responded to by French coordinators, principals and teachers.)

Eighteen (69%) of the *French coordinators* reported that some action had been taken in their district to lower the attrition rate of FIP. The action taken, strategies used by the individual districts are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 . Action taken in district to lower the drop-out rate in FIP - Coordinators

School District Number and Name	Type of Action
#15- Penticton	Use of communication and monitoring program in September with new FI students. Use of confirmation of enrolment form asking for commitment.
#27- Cariboo-Chilcotin	Candian Parents for French efforts.
#28- Quesnel	Try to hire and retain strong teachers with respect to language competence.
#31- Merritt	Exchanges at the secondary level.
#35- Langley	Meeting with students and teachers (at the grade 7-8 levels) and between students (at the grade 9, 10 and 11 levels).
#40- New Westminster	Information sessions for parents and students.
#42- Maple Ridge #44- North Vancouver	Communication with secondary level between intermediate and early secondary.
#48- Howe Sound	More choices of subjects.
#59- Peace River South	Communication with parents. Increase of L.A..
#60- Peace River North	Communication with parents. Communication with parents on how to support children.
#61- Greater Victoria	More choices of subjects. More teachers involved in teaching courses.
#63- Saanich	More choices of subjects. Development and implementation policy to deal with students experiencing difficulties. Development of strategies to recruit and hire best possible teachers.
#65- Cowichan	Communication with parents. Exchanges. Communication via drama presentation is promoted between levels in the FIP.
#71- Courtenay	Exchanges.
#72- Campbell River	Approach with teaching staff.
#75- Mission	Information sessions for parents and students. Visits to the secondary school with F.I. students.

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Ten (45%) of the 22 *principals* reported that some action had been taken in their school to lower attrition. Principals from Coquitlam, Delta, Surrey and Vancouver all reported that action had been taken. Table 2 describes action taken in the four selected school districts.

Table 2 . Action taken in district to lower the drop-out rate in FIP as reported by Elementary and Secondary Principals

School District Number and Name	Type of Action
#36- Surrey	Communication with parents. Both parents and teachers are being made aware of the value of remaining in the program to grade 12. Exchanges. Letter exchange visits to the secondary school with FI students. Organization of cultural events e.g. La Fête, concours oratoire.... Review of research guideline established for individual cases review.
#37- Delta	Establishment of a process with L.A. Development and implementation policy to deal with students experiencing difficulties. Meeting with classroom teachers and appropriate team-members. Meeting with classroom teachers, appropriate team-members and parents. More liaisons between secondary and elementary schools. Maintain quality of instruction.
#39- Vancouver	Information sessions for parents and students. Communication with parents. Exchanges. More liaisons between secondary and elementray schools.
#43- Coquitlam	Meeting with classroom teachers, appropriate team-member and parents. Offer special services in French: Bilingual resource-room and librarian, French L.A. and teacher assistant, Gifted student program.

Twelve (39%) of the 31 *teachers* reported that some action had been taken in their classroom to lower drop-out from FIP. Eight (26%) of the teachers responded that no action had been taken, and 11 (35%) did not answer this item on the questionnaire. Table 3 describes the strategies implemented, as reported by the teachers in the four selected districts.

Table 3 . Action taken in district to lower the drop-out rate in FIP as reported by teachers

School District Number and Name	Type of Action
#36- Surrey	Exchanges. More extra-curricular activities. More contact between classes. Interaction with other immersion students. Talk with students on advantages and disadvantages of staying in the program. Teaching time reduced 10% to 15% in order that teachers may provide individual help for students in their own classroom.
#37- Delta	Give students recognition and visit them. Maintain quality of Instruction. Engage students in a cooperative, collaborative theme-based exciting curriculum.
#39- Vancouver	Communication with secondary level between intermediate and early secondary level. Discussion on the merits of learning second language (especially in Canada). Give students recognition and visit them.
#43- Coquitlam	Modification of the program for students experiencing difficulties.

In your opinion, in which type of program is the drop-out rate greatest?
(Responded to by principals and teachers only.)

Principals and teachers both reported that the highest attrition occurred in grade seven early immersion type of program. Principals reported that attrition during the secondary school years was highest in grade eight, while teachers did not report any one particular grade level in secondary school as being related to higher attrition from FIP.

What do you think are the main reasons for students leaving the program?
(Responded to by French coordinators, principals and teachers.)

The questionnaire provided eleven alternatives (arrived at from reasons given most frequently in various studies) to choose from and the respondents were asked to indicate three to five choices and provide the order of importance of their responses. The eleven choices were: academic difficulty, quality of teaching, parents influence/advice, limited choice of subjects, having to speak French, limited resources and materials, peer pressure, boredom, social reasons, future plans, and too much work. The category of "other" was also provided and respondents were asked to specify the nature of their answer.

Academic difficulty was most often rated as the primary reason for FIP drop-out. A full 87% of the teachers, 62% of the coordinators and 59% of the principals cited academic difficulty as one of the most important reasons for attrition. All three groups of respondents perceived "limited choice of subjects", and "too much work" to also be major factors in students leaving French immersion programs. In addition, teachers reported "having to speak French", principals reported "peer pressure" and "social factors", while coordinators reported "quality of teaching". See Table 4 for a breakdown of these responses.

Table 4. Main Reasons for students leaving F.I.P. (%)

	Coordinators (N=26)	Principals (N=22)	Teachers (N=31)
Academic difficulty	62	59	87
Quality of teaching	50	27	13
Parent's influence	35	32	16
Limited choice of subjects	50	50	48
Having to speak French	15	18	52
Limited resources	4	0	6
Peer pressure	31	45	32
Boredom	2	5	23
Social reasons	38	41	23
Future plans	15	27	35
Too much work	8	36	65
Other*	27	27	3

* Most often cited "other" reason was moving out of area, transportation problems, desire to attend neighbourhood school and wanting alternative or mini-school programs.

Do you have any suggestions on how to reduce the drop-out rate in FIP? at the district, school and classroom (particularly grade 7 and 8 levels)?
(Responded to by French coordinators, principals and teachers.)

This item was presented in an open-ended format. After collection of the data, thirteen categories were labeled which appeared to account for the majority of the responses. The results will be presented by group on each of the three possible intervention levels.

French Coordinators. Various suggestions were offered on how to reduce the drop-out rate at the district, school and classroom levels. At the district level, 21 respondents offered a total of 39 suggestions. The most recurrent themes included: "teachers, staffing, immersion teaching (10), in second place to "communication with parents" and "program concerns" (5), in third place to "communication" (4). At the school level, 22 respondents offered a total of 30 suggestions. The dominant responses here involved "extra-curricular activities, exchanges" (7), "academic concerns, course selection" (5), "communication" (4) "communication with parents and students" and "teachers, staffing, immersion teaching" (3). At the classroom level 22 respondents offered a total of 34 suggestions. Those mentioned most included "program concerns" and "extra-curricular activities, exchanges" (6), and "academic concerns, course selection" and "teachers, staffing, and immersion teaching" (5). A listing of all the suggestions (divided into 14 categories) is given in the Appendix .

Principals. At the district level, 14 respondents offered a total of 25 suggestions. The most recurrent themes included "academic concerns, course selection" (5), "program concerns" (4), and "extra-curricular activities, exchanges" (3). At the school level, 13 respondents proposed a total of 20 suggestions. The most popular was related to "promotion of French presence" (5). Other important suggestions referred to "communication with parents and students", "academic concerns, course selection" (5), and "program concerns" (3). At the classroom level, ten respondents offered a total of 17 suggestions. Those mentioned most included "exchanges with secondary-level schools", "program concerns", and "extracurricular activities, exchanges".

Teachers. At the district level, 25 respondents offered a total of 36 suggestions. They included "program concerns" (9), "extra-curricular activities, exchanges" (8), "communication with parents and students", "facilities, funding and support", and "promotion of French presence" (4). At the school level, 24 respondents proposed a total of 31 suggestions. The most recurrent theme were related to "program concerns" (7) and "extra-curricular activities, exchanges" (5). Other main suggestions were related to "facilities, funding and support" (4), and "learning difficulties, learning assistance, special services" (3). At the classroom level, 18 respondents offered a total of 23 suggestions. The majority of them were related to "program concerns" and "extra-curricular activities, exchanges" (4).

Has there been or is there being any research conducted in your district on drop-outs from FIP?
(Responded to by French coordinators and helping teachers only.)

Of the 26 returned questionnaires, eight (31%) districts reported that there had been research conducted on the attrition rate in their French immersion programs. Six districts reported that they had participated in a research study, while two reported that surveys had taken place in their district.

In general, do you feel that FIP drop-out rate in your district is high, normal, low, or don't know?
(Responded to by French coordinators and helping teachers only.)

Of the 26 coordinators responding, the majority (N=16; 62%) perceived the attrition rate in their district as "normal". Five districts perceived their district's attrition rate as high, two reported low attrition and two districts didn't know. One district reported "normal" attrition at the secondary level and "low" attrition at the elementary school level. There did not appear to be any relationship between the geographical location of the school district and attrition rates.

Would you be interested in participating in a study to design and implement a plan of action to help reduce the drop-out rate in FIP in your district/school/classroom?
(Responded to by French coordinators, principals and teachers.)

Coordinators, principals and teachers displayed interest in participating in a future research study. Of the total 74 who responded on the issue of participation, 41 (55%) were interested. Sixty-eight percent of the coordinators, 33% of the principals, and 61% of the teachers would agree to a follow up study on attrition rates in FIP. It should be noted that approximately 26% of those who responded would be interested in participating but felt they did not have the time to become involved at the time. Including this group of "perhaps" responders, a total of 60 (81%) of the respondents would be interested in participating at some time in the future, given the opportunity.

Discussion

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate education personnel's perception whether any research and intervention had been implemented. More than two thirds of the French coordinators who responded felt that the drop-out rate was "normal" in their district. At the elementary level, principals and teachers both felt that the drop out rate was higher in grade seven early immersion program than it was in late immersion programs. At the secondary level, principals indicated grade eight as the level where students are more likely to leave the program, but there was little consensus among the teachers. Although it is difficult to determine at precisely what level the drop-out rate is the highest, the present results along with the findings of previous literature, suggest that the junior high level is especially critical. Furthermore, most of the respondents felt that the drop-out rate was higher in early rather than late grade seven immersion programs. It would be interesting to see if this perception is true, by consulting the available data recording enrollment from year to year in different school districts even though the task of obtaining accurate data may not be an easy one. This process of verification could lead to a better understanding of the attrition phenomenon in that it would suggest more specifically which programs (early, middle, late) require improvement. More research is needed on rate of attrition to find out when student transfer is likely to occur.

All three groups of respondents seemed to share the same perceptions regarding the reasons for students leaving the program. Indeed, they all rated "academic difficulty", "limited choice of subjects" and "peer pressure" among the most crucial reasons. Teachers also mentioned "having to speak French" and "future plans" as important reasons. The present study confirms previous research where the main reasons for leaving French immersion programs were reported to be academic difficulty, social and emotional difficulties, and the quality of the program. Although some of these reasons provided by respondents are probably inevitable in any program, regular or immersion, other important questions remain. For instance, are the immersion programs in their current format designed for all students, and if not, should there be a restructuring of the program to better accommodate the students?

About one third of the districts had participated in a research project on drop-outs in French immersion programs. In addition, almost 70% of the French coordinators, 45% of the principals and 39% of the teachers mentioned various types of action that had taken place in their district, school or classroom to reduce attrition. This indicates not only a good degree of recognition of the problem facing French immersion programs, but also a concrete attempt to deal with the issue. The suggestions to decrease the attrition rate was divided into three

categories (district, school and classroom). At the district level, coordinators focused on issues related to teaching, principals on academic and program concerns and teachers on extra-curricular activities. At the school level, extra-curricular activities and communication with parents was suggested by the coordinators; extra-curricular activities and program concerns were issues important to teachers; and principals suggestions involved communication with parents and promotion of French culture. At the classroom level, the most important suggestions from all three groups were related to program concerns and extra-curricular activities. It is interesting to note that principals and teachers rated program concerns as an area to be addressed at all three district, school and classroom levels. Teachers also ranked extra-curricular activities an important issue at all three levels. The responses of the coordinators, principals and teachers on what action may be taken to reduce the rate of attrition are full of ideas which could be of great utility for educators and parents in school districts, schools and in the classroom. These suggestions can be found in the Appendix .

Many suggestions and the implementation of strategies for retention, especially those relating to academic and program concerns, course selection, staffing, immersion teaching, facilities, funding, support of special services, transportation and access and promotion of French presence are under the authority of administrators and school boards. Others fall under principals and teachers, such as communication with parents and students and extra-curricular activities and bilingual exchanges.

We have extracted information that is mostly related to communication, exchanges with secondary-levels schools and communication with parents and students. This information could lead to the development of a plan of action to be tried with French immersion students in a sample of two to three school districts. This would best be done at the grade seven level because it is a year of transition between elementary and secondary levels. This plan could consist of meetings and discussion sessions with teachers and students of FIP at the secondary level, three or four times during the school year. A questionnaire on students' intentions to leave or remain in the program would be completed before and after the session. The data would be analyzed and a complete plan of action would be recommended. We have selected other suggestions to reduce the drop-out rate that could be worthwhile trying in developing and possibly implementing. Some of these suggestions could also be included in our action plan. The following page describes some of these suggestions.

Ultimately, it will be very interesting to find out if, after replication of studies like the plan of action that we propose, whether improvement of FIP will lead to an increased retention of students in the programs.

Possible intervention strategies to reduce FIP attrition:

Use of communication and monitoring of program in September with new FIP students.
Encourage schools to take district level information (have statistics available of drop-out rates at all levels) , determine reasons for drop-out and plan common strategies.
Visits from French secondary schools and universities which display a positive attitude towards the French language.
More liaison between elementary and secondary schools
Visits to classes from FIP graduates
Visits to secondary schools with FIP
Career models using French language
Pairing grade 7 students and grade 11 FIP students
Student mentoring about high school options
Production of a video on the advantages of FIP
Communication with parents and students:

- On how to modify the program
- On how to support the child
- On how to support the program

Information sessions for parents and students
Make greater use of French speaking parents

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APPENDIX

List of suggestions to reduce the drop-out rate in French Immersion Programs

1. Communication

- Meeting with students and teachers (7-8, 9-10, 11-12).
- Interaction with other immersion students.
- Increase communication between elementary and secondary teachers.
- Coordination of information and discussion sessions in grade 7 to prepare for grade 8
- Use of communication and monitoring program in September with new French Immersion students.
- Use of confirmation of enrollment form asking for commitment.
- Keep close contact between school districts, teachers and parents.
- District personnel needs to be aware of students and parents concerns.
- District information should outline expectations -especially for those pupils who may have difficulty with program.
- Well-planned articulation process needs to be in place.
- Stress commitment to the program objectives to graduates from immersion.
- Public visibility of Board support for immersion program.
- Make certain that you have a strong advocate of FIP and language program at the district level.
- Have statistics available of drop-out rates at all levels available for teachers and principals.
- Encourage schools to take district level information and determine reasons for drop-out.
- The remedy-solution lies at the school level.
- Good administration and an understanding secretarial staff that can relate to new teachers, especially those who are not fully bilingual and are newcomers to the province.

2. Exchanges with secondary-level schools:

- Exchanges with secondary level.
- Communication with secondary level between intermediate and early secondary (also information meetings' visits to high schools).
- More liaison between secondary and elementary schools.
- Visits from French secondary school and universities which display a positive attitude towards language.
- Visits to the class from graduates of immersion.
- Visits to secondary schools with FIP.
- Career models using their language.
- Pairing a grade 7 student and a grade 11 French Immersion student.
- Student for mentoring about high school options.
- More contact between classes.

3. Communication with parents and students:

- How to modify program.
- How to support child.

- How to support program.
- Information sessions for parents and students.
- Elementary school parent liaison with secondary schools.
- Meetings with classroom teachers and appropriate team members and parents.
- Make greater use of French speaking parents.
- Should involve students and parents and administration of elementary and secondary school.
- Information for parents on the FIP at the pre-school level.
- More commitment from the parents.
- Talk with students on advantages and disadvantges of staying in the program.
- Resource persons who talk with students on advantages and disadvantages of staying in the program.
- Visits from Head teachers to encourage students and discuss with students.
- Form a parent help support group.

4. Academic concerns, course selection:

- More choice of subjects.
- More choice of French extra-curricular courses.
- To keep 3 to 4 courses in French up to grade 12.
- Diversify teaching techniques.
- Communication via drama presentations are promoted.
- Increase focus on communicative experiential approach.
- Engage students in a cooperative, collaborative theme-basis exciting curriculum.
- Increase of cooperative strategies.
- Timetable to allow more choices.

5. Program concerns:

- Open single-track Immersion Centre.
- Put the program in another high school.
- Have all the Immersion classes in the same school.
- Offer Late Immersion.
- Encourage French as a Second Language from K to 7 in order to encourage enrollment in the Late Immersion Program.
- Start the Late Immersion in grade 5.
- Start Immersion in grade 4.
- Make French Immersion, enriching, dynamic.
- Don't separate French Immersion from English programs.
- Keep students involved in all activities and make them feel part of the school.
- Instill good work habits from primary level on.
- Maintain quality of instruction.
- Increase the percentage of time spent in French.
- Ensure that the program is learner-focused and that students are allowed to progress at their own rate.
- Progressively, students should be able to correct their written work at the grade 4 l evel, and at the grade 6 level to analyze the sentences in a grammatical way.
- Program modification.
- New organization and restructuring of the program at the secondary level.
- Less differences between programs amongst schools.
- Knowledge network and French programs.
- Make sure that the program continues and that all the subjects are taught in French.

- Schools need to develop enriched programs for students who are interested in developing themselves in many areas, not only in language and literature.
- Try to give less homework. Students often complain that the French Immersion program is more demanding than the English one.
- Smaller class sizes (maximum of 25-26).
- Students who speak too much English should go out of the program.
- Bilingual announcements on the PA system.
- Buddy reading.
- We should work at devising a Language Arts program which does not double everything (e.g. grammar, composition, literature), so that it is more analogous to regular program students.
- Positive encouragement for French spoken in class.
- Both programs (English and French) should be similar in content.
- To allow many teamwork activities where students can use their French.
- More prep time for French Immersion teachers.
- Recognize and design activities for individual learning styles.

6. Teachers, staffing, Immersion teaching:

- Meetings with classroom teachers and appropriate team members.
- Develop strategies to recruit and hire best possible teachers.
- Approach with teaching staff.
- More teachers involved in teaching courses.
- Hire teachers who are going to stay on a 2 year contract and offer a bonus if the teacher is good.
- Hire teachers with different specialities.
- Create stability amongst staff.
- Try to hire more experienced teachers.
- More work to inservice teachers into immersion methodology, second language teaching, Year 2000, theories.
- I try the best I can. Often students are tired of speaking in French and this has a negative effect on my teaching and activities in the classroom.
- French teachers should not teach English courses.
- Try to have more one level classrooms.
- Come to the understanding that one level classrooms are easier for teachers.
- Point out clearly to Junior Secondary High Schools teachers that the goals and objectives of the French Immersion Program are not to get sudents "ready" for the grade 8 French Grammar-emphasized classes.
- To create a team of teachers sharing similar enthusiasm and objectives.
- Dynamic teaching.
- Teachers should be released 10% to 15% of their time in order to provide individual help for students in their own classroom.

7. Facilities, funding, support:

- School districts should make a list of all the available resources in order to help educators to teach written French, Social Sciences and Sciences.
- Increase the budget for resources in the schools.
- More support for the teachers.
- Need of adequate material for teaching.

8. Extra-curricular activities, exchanges:

- More extra-curricular activities (exchanges and socio-cultural).
- Exchanges.
- More funding should be given to exchanges.
- Try to set up a network for exchanges with Québec.
- Letter exchange.
- Create-participate in a telecommunication network with francophones across Canada and throughout the world.
- Correspondence with natives.
- Organize more cultural event (e.g. exchanges, La Fête, field trips, performances, concours), also, with other schools and districts.
- Provide more occasions for students to experience French language communication situations.
- Offer opportunities for special get togethers and social activities.
- More interactions with French community.

9. Learning difficulties, learning assistance, special services:

- Develop and implement policy to deal with students experiencing difficulties.
- Increase of L.A.
- Establish a process with L.A.
- Early indentification and intervention for pupils who are having difficulty.
- Review of research guidelines established for individual cases reviews.
- Offer special services in French: Bilingual resource room and library, French learning assistance and teacher assistant, gifted student program.
- Celebrate effort and achievement together with the provision of special service to students experiencing problems.
- Modification of the program for students experiencing difficulties.

10. Transportation, access:

- Transportation.
- Allow similar social groups to go to the same high school.
- Offer French Immersion in neighbourhood schools.

11. Promotion of French presence:

- Greater promotion of French presence.
- Build a healthy core French Program in each school that encourages FI students to stay in program after Year 5 by creating a positive all year round atmosphere that supports French language and culture.
- Do not isolate students in building and minimize separatness.
- Increase interaction of English and French program.
- Quality of instruction with a heavy cultural component to illustrate value of second official language.
- Make the French program more highly valued.
- Give students encouragement, recognition and visit them.
- More publicity in the Elementary schools.
- More publicity in the media for French Immersion Programs.
- Production of a video on the advantages of the program.

12. Philosophical viewpoints:

- Both parents and teachers are being made aware of the value of remaining in the program to grade 12.
- Reduce elitist notion of French Immersion (program is for all children).
- Look at the reason for entry.
- Insure that the program does not become an academic challenge program (particularly. in grade 6 and 7).
- More direction and find out what works well for the program.
- Develop a vision for the program that everyone understands (reduces expectations, therefore disappointment).
- To develop more precise objectives for each year and to favor continuity from one year to the other.
- Discussion on the merits of learning a second language (especially in Canada).
- Recognition that the immersion situation is different.
- Encourage a change of attitude from the Intermediate students where language is not a concern anymore but becomes a barrier in their life mostly centered on "social reasons".
- To see the "Profile of the Immersion Students" on the middle-term (school years) and long term (university-career-jobs).

13. Strategies for retention:

- Offer a provincial French Immersion Completion certificate.
- Offer bursaries to French Immersion graduates.
- The district should write letters to immersion students when leaving school, encouraging them to continue in the program.

14. Other suggestions:

- Canadian Parents for French efforts.
- Local Canadian Parents for French discussions with teachers.
- Canadian Parents for French should meet with parents and students who are contemplating dropping out.
- Plan further ahead.
- Survey of French Immersion parents.
- Mention of the French Immersion Program in the promotional catalogue of our district.